



EPA Fact Sheet:

Phase 2 Sampling in Libby, MT

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What is Phase 2 sampling ?

Beginning the week of March 5, EPA began collecting a new round of samples to analyze for asbestos. This sampling is referred to as "Phase 2". Like the first round of sampling, Phase 2 is designed to obtain information on the level of asbestos fibers that occur in air inside people's homes. However, unlike the first round, where EPA collected only stationary air samples, EPA will collect two different types of air samples:

Personal Air Samples: These are collected by a sampling device worn by a person. The air is collected from near the person's face. This type of sample reflects what a person actually breathes.

Stationary Air Samples: These are collected by a sampling device that is located in the main living area of the home. This type of sample reflects the average level in the house.

EPA is collecting these two different types of samples in four various "sampling scenarios." People may "stir-up" fibers from dust when they move around their homes. The amount of fibers people breathe in while moving about the house might be higher than EPA could predict based on a stationary sample collected in any single room.

EPA wants to measure the amount of asbestos that people may be exposed to while doing 1) routine activities, 2) periodic activities such as cleaning, 3) special activities such as remodeling their home, or 4) outdoor activities such as gardening. EPA also wants to gain information about the people's exposure when

entering attics with vermiculite insulation.

What is a sampling scenario ?

A sampling "scenario" tries to re-create different ways people may be exposed to asbestos. We call those "exposure pathways." EPA will look at four different possible "pathways," or "scenarios":

- 1) **Routine activities** in a home, including all normal indoor activities.
- 2) **"Active cleaning"** (vacuuming, dusting, sweeping, fluffing pillows)
- 3) **Simulated house remodeling** (any activity that leads to direct contact with vermiculite insulation)
- 4) **Garden rototilling** in gardens that contain vermiculite (in spring/summer).

How is the sampling done ?

For the "routine activity" scenario, each volunteer will be asked to wear a personal air monitor in their home for 2-3 days. For the "active cleaning" scenario, EPA will send someone to the house to vacuum, dust and sweep for about 2 hours. The sampler will wear a personal air monitor. Residents will relocate for 2-3 days.

In both cases, a stationary air monitor will collect air from the main part of the house. By comparing these two types of sample (personal vs. stationary), we can tell if it is important to use personal air monitors to evaluate how much asbestos is inhaled. In addition, the results will improve our ability to determine if any of the

activities are likely to be a cause for health concern.

The first two scenarios are being measured at approximately 12 different houses. EPA has selected these houses to provide a range of expected asbestos levels and exposures.

EPA contractors will conduct the third sampling scenario by wearing a personal air monitor while working directly with vermiculite. The samplers will be wearing fully protective clothing and respirators. They will conduct a variety of activities related to working with vermiculite.

A total of 3-5 homes will be selected for evaluating the "simulated house remodeling" scenario. This part of the program will begin after the first two scenarios are completed.

The garden rototilling scenario will not begin until late spring or summer, when the earth tends to be relatively dry.

All participation in the program is strictly voluntary. The whole sampling effort may take approximately three months to complete.

For More Information

Community members are encouraged to stop by the EPA Information Center in downtown Libby at 501 Mineral Avenue or contact any of the team members listed below. The Information Center is open weekdays and is a good place to get more information, ask questions or express concerns.

The phone number is (406) 293-6194.

EPA Contacts

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